

**BUREAU OF FIRE
MANAGEMENT**
3780 Industrial Ave. S.
Coeur d'Alene ID 83815
Phone (208) 769-1525
Fax (208) 769-1524



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March 24, 2006

Idaho 2006 Program Guidance

Community Fire Protection Grant Program

(in cooperation with USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry)

Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects on non federal land adjacent to active Forest Service projects in Idaho.

Within every county in Idaho, communities have been threatened by wildland fire. Our best defense against catastrophic losses of homes, businesses, forests, and watersheds is a strong, proactive offense. Removing brush and thinning forests or "reducing hazardous fuels" and creating a "defensible space" fuel break around our communities (**a community-wide fuelbreak**) may be the most important preventative actions we can take.

Idaho Department of Lands, in partnership with USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry, is pleased to announce that funds are available for use by Idaho's counties to reduce the threat of wildland fire in Idaho near our National Forests. There will be approximately \$250,000 available statewide – \$155,000 estimated for use in USDA FS Region 4, and approximately \$95,000 available for use in Region 1.

Who May Apply

Applicants for these funds must be counties. The County Wildland Fire Interagency Groups are encouraged to prioritize projects locally.

Background

Community Fire Protection Funds (in cooperation with USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry):

Following the Cerro Grande escaped prescribed burn in New Mexico, legislators identified the desperate need for treatment of hazardous fuels near communities. The following language and criteria from the 2002 appropriations bill applies in reference to these available funds:

- "...may be used on adjacent non federal lands for protecting communities when hazards reduction is planned on national forest lands that have the potential to place such communities at risk..."
- "...to plan and implement projects specifically designed to protect communities from wildland fires where and when hazardous fuel reduction activities (prescribed fire) on National Forest Systems lands have the potential to place these communities at risk from wildland fire..." (**Note: Activity must occur on non federal lands prior to prescribed fire activity occurring on federal lands.**)
- "...the time between project initiation on National Forest System lands and non federal lands should not exceed 3 years..." (**Note: Actual implementation, not planning.**)
- **"Projects should focus on the most high-risk areas to decrease risks to the community, rather than scattered in numerous projects..."**

Objectives and Selection Criteria

1. Align hazardous fuels reduction projects on non federal lands with active Forest Service projects as described in appropriation criteria above.
2. Fund projects which are designed to create highly-effective landscape fuelbreaks. A highly-effective fuelbreak is characterized by these attributes:
 - The project design would include thinning of trees, removal of brush, and slash treatment **across multiple properties** such that a running crown fire would drop to the ground
 - Fire intensity would be reduced markedly, making fire control by ground forces possible.
3. Fund projects which demonstrate efficiency by leveraging local sweat equity or funds as reflected by cost per acre treated. Proposals which demonstrate efficient use of funds by acres accomplished will be favored in the ranking processes (i.e. more acres cleared at a lower rate).
4. Fund projects which contribute to forest or rangeland health.
5. Fund projects which contribute to improved resiliency of municipal water supply systems to catastrophic fire.
6. There is no required match, although proposals which demonstrate a local contribution will be favored in the ranking process. If local contribution is represented in the grantee's application, grantee will be required to submit documentation detailing this contribution when requesting grant reimbursement throughout the life of the grant.
7. Fund projects in areas of greatest risk.
8. Provide seed money for projects in counties that have not yet begun hazardous fuels reduction projects on non federal lands.
9. Consistent with the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan*, a bias exists to fund projects sponsored by counties.
10. These funds are not to be used for any other purpose than listed in the criteria. Equipment purchases are not allowable.

Process

The 2006 State of Idaho steps and timeline for the distribution of Community Fire Protection Funds:

1. **March 24** – Idaho Department of Lands will announce Community Fire Protection program criteria and provide an application for counties to submit for use of these funds. There is a need for significant collaboration amongst partners in the county.
2. **May 5**– Deadline for application due to Idaho Department of Lands.

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3. **May 10** – Idaho Department of Lands Area Supervisors and Forest Supervisors of Idaho's National Forests will be invited to suggest a ranking of proposals submitted from within their local county(s). Response must be submitted to Kurt Naccarato, IDL HFT Program Manager, knaccarato@idl.idaho.gov by **May 19**.
4. **May 25** – ISFPWG grant prioritization sub-group will convene to review and prioritize applications.
5. **June 6 and 7** – ISFPWG grant prioritization sub-group will consult with the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group on the suggested ranking of the proposals from across the state. The Working Group will make a final recommendation to the Idaho Department of Lands Director for final approval.
6. **June 23** – Idaho Department of Lands will notify successful counties of grant awards.
7. ***Upon receipt of Proposed Project Budget and Narrative*** from grantee, Idaho Department of Lands will complete the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and financial counseling with each successful recipient.
8. Funds begin to be available to the successful recipients who have ***signed MOUs***. Projects must be completed by August 30, 2008.

For further information on the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group or the Idaho Department of Lands National Fire Plan programs, visit our Web sites at:

http://www.idl.idaho.gov/nat_fire_plan/index_nfp.htm

or

www.idahofireplan.org

Thank you for your interest. Together, we can continue to reduce the threat of wildland fire to communities throughout Idaho.

Sincerely,



Brian Shiplett
Chief, Bureau of Fire Management
Idaho Department of Lands

BS:ss

cc: Idaho Department of Lands Area Supervisors and Fire Wardens
Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group
USDA Forest Service Forest Supervisors, Fire Management Officers, Regional Offices
(R1/R4)